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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 08 USNATO 000174

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2018

TAGS: [NATO PREL AF](#)

SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT - MAY 14, 2008

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Classified By: DCM Richard G. Olson, Jr., for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: Independent Directorate for Local Governance Head Jelani Popal briefed the NAC in ISAF format on his goals and challenges, and took questions on the Paris Conference, the delivery of assistance by PRTs, reconciliation, and Musa Qala. He called for the international community to focus on the second tier of provinces in Afghanistan such as Ghor and Badghis, where violence had the potential to develop if underlying conditions were not addressed. At the same time, he stressed that the international community should not ignore the development and reconstruction needs of the peaceful provinces. In a separate NAC meeting of only the 26 Allies, the Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee (D/CMC) noted that seven new force offers had been confirmed by SHAPE from the Bucharest Summit. He quickly added, however, that these offers would have minimal impact on longstanding ISAF force shortfalls. SHAPE DCOS for Operations MG Wright stated that ISAF would begin incrementally transferring security

responsibility for Kabul to the Afghans in August 2008.

-- Balkans: The SYG will travel to New York next week to meet with UN SYG Ban Ki-Moon to address NATO-UN issues, particularly with regard to the situation in Kosovo. The D/CMC reported that the Military Committee had received SHAPE's input to Revision 3 of the Balkans Operations Plan and had forwarded it to nations for comments by May 16. MG Wright briefed the PermReps on the situation in Kosovo, including election participation and his recent trip with SACEUR's to the region. He commented that NATO was in danger of not being able to properly prepare to implement the new tasks associated with security sector development and training of the Kosovo Security Force.

-- Africa) Support to the AU: No discussion.

-- Iraq: The SYG noted that the PCG will discuss the out-of-cycle guidance on the PMR this week.

-- Statements on Political Subjects: The UK reported on the UNSC's debate on Security Sector Reform in the context of the UNSYG's report on Security Peace and Development. The UNSC will debate post-conflict stabilization May 20 under UK auspices. Slovenia reported that U.S., Slovenian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Swedish representatives visited Tbilisi to meet with Georgian and UNOMIG representatives. Following German objections to a proposal to ask the International Military Staff to provide intelligence updates on the situation in Georgia, Ambassador Nuland reported that she was seeking authorization to share more U.S. intelligence

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on the situation with NATO Allies. The SYG welcomed this offer, asking other Allies also to provide what they could.

-- AOB: The UK will host an informal NATO ministerial on Transformation and Reform September 18-19. The D/CMC confirmed a generous Canadian offer of helicopters for NATO operations. Ambassador Nuland informed PermReps that U/S of Defense for Policy Edelman would visit Brussels in early June, adding that USNATO would arrange a briefing by him for Allies.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

12. (C/NF) IDLG HEAD POPAL BRIEFS THE NAC IN ISAF FORMAT: In a broad overview of his efforts, Independent Directorate for Local Governance Head Jelani Popal told the NAC his main mission from President Karzai was to "bridge the gap" between the Afghan central government and provincial and local governments. He pointed to the existence of this gap as a failing by the government of its responsibility to its people, arguing that the Taliban had filled this void through the use of murder and intimidation to gain influence. Highlighting the quandary faced by the Afghan government, Popal said that the Constitution allowed for more authority to be delegated to the provinces and districts than ever before, but the government had been unable to strengthen "fragile, moribund" structures or sort out clear roles for provincial, district, and village councils. He stated that, for the five years prior to the formation of the IDLG, neither the Afghan government nor the international community paid sufficient attention to the importance of developing local governance. He highlighted some accomplishments achieved in the seven months of the IDLG's existence: 12 governors replaced with successors chosen on merit; the creation of a new counternarcotics department within the IDLG, responsible for assisting provincial governments coordinate eradication with robust alternative livelihoods programs; and the recently approved Five-year Strategic Workplan. Popal drew Allies' attention to the Afghanistan

Social Outreach Program (ASOP), an IDLG initiative to link communities more closely with government, while also using traditional social structures to improve security in rural areas.

¶3. (C/NF) PermReps warmly welcomed Popal to the NAC, praising his efforts and offering words of support. Ambassador Nuland assured Popal of strong U.S. support for his efforts, and urged him to return to the NAC in the future for updates.

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She commended Popal's efforts to remove poor governors, particularly in Farah, Ghazni, and Konar. Noting that the U.S. has been encouraging nations around the world to make generous pledges at the upcoming Paris Support Conference, she asked him what concrete deliverables he hoped to see at Paris for his work. The German, Greek, and Lithuanian PermReps asked Popal about resentment they sense among some in Afghanistan that insecure provinces receive the bulk of the development assistance. Asserting that the Taliban was a weak enemy, D/CMC General Eikenberry said weak governance posed a far more serious threat to ISAF and the future of Afghanistan than did the Taliban. The D/CMC asked how NATO could better help Afghan security forces help Popal's mission. The Canadian PermRep asked for Popal's views on reconciliation. The UK PermRep asked what lessons should be learned from the success in retaking Musa Qala from the Taliban.

¶4. (C/NF) On PRTs, Popal encouraged PRTs to work alongside and through Provincial Development Councils, as well as helping the PDCs develop budgeting and planning capabilities.

He acknowledged the problem that some PRTs have significant resources, while others have less, citing Ghor (Lithuanian PRT), Badghis (Spanish PRT), and Baghlan (Hungarian PRT) as under resourced PRTs. He encouraged creative thinking to resolve these inequities, suggesting that at a minimum resources could be moved between the PRTs of EU nations to where they were most needed. At the same time, he recognized that each PRT is a national effort. (Note: In the Allies-only meeting which followed, Lithuania made a point of supporting Popal on the need for a more coordinated approach among PRTs, including possibly the need for common funding. Lithuania suggested that NATO's Policy Coordination Group be tasked with examining this issue.) In this context, he stated he has categorized Afghanistan's 34 provinces into three types: those with active, ongoing violence; those that are presently peaceful, but show early signs of developing conflict; and those without conflict, but which need much development assistance. He called for the international community to focus on the second type, citing Dai Kunai, Ghor, Badghis, Badakshan, Nuristan, and Bamyan as examples. At the same time, he said it was also important that the international community not inadvertently "penalize" the "peaceful" provinces by denying them the development assistance they require. To the Canadian PermRep, Popal stated his focus was on eliminating the root causes that turn people against the government in the first place. To the UK PermRep, he stated that the Afghan government was able to overcome the skepticism of the people that the government would not stay and that the Taliban would return; it is a powerful sign to the people when the government is able to demonstrate to them that it is working for them, in a unified way.

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¶5. (C/NF) BUCHAREST FORCE GENERATION FOLLOW-UP: In a separate NAC session that did not involve the ISAF contributors, SHAPE DCOS for Operations MG Wright and the D/CMC stated that SHAPE had submitted its final tally of Bucharest force contributions and their effect on the ISAF CJSOR to the IMS (e-mailed to State EUR/RPM). The D/CMC noted that many of the Bucharest "pledges" were in fact merely reiterations of offers that had already been made two, three, and even four

times previously, and that SHAPE was somewhat limited in its effort due to the fact that some national military representatives at SHAPE were unable to confirm their nations' offers. Of nine "new" offers identified by SHAPE at Bucharest, seven had been confirmed. The D/CMC singled out the French offer of one battalion in RC-East and their continued leadership in RC-Capital as particularly significant, pointing out it would let the Italians leave RC-Capital in August 2008. He also noted the Italian offer of additional UAV assets. The D/CMC stressed that longstanding force shortfalls remained unfilled: two maneuver battalions for RC-S; one "border security" battalion for RC-S; PRTs for Dai Kundi and Nimroz provinces; airborne ISR and electronic warfare assets; and military rotary wing aircraft. Defense Ministers will discuss this in June.

¶6. (C/NF) TRANSFER OF KABUL TO ANSF: In his overview of ongoing operations, MG Wright stated that early work on the transfer of security responsibilities for Kabul and RC-Capital, per President Karzai's announcement in Bucharest, had begun. Wright said that the present intention was to begin an incremental transfer of responsibility in August 2008, beginning in Kabul and moving on district-by-district throughout the rest of ISAF's RC-Capital region as conditions permit.

¶7. (C/NF) OPERATIONS: MG Wright noted increased attacks by Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) on highways, bridges, and other infrastructure and predicted continued OMF interest in such attacks following the recent destruction of a bridge in Zabul province. MG Wright cited the easing of pressure by the Pakistani government on militants in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas as a factor in the rise of OMF activity in RC-East. He anticipated that the Pakistani Taliban would profit from any deals with the government, gaining freedom of movement both within the FATA and into Afghanistan. He stated that 50 percent of activity over the past week in RC-S was due to the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) operations in Garmsir. He said joint operations by ISAF and ANSF in the Lashkar Gah, Nahr-e-Saraj, and Sangin areas of Helmand were pressuring OMF up and down the Helmand river valley. He pointed to continuing positive cooperation by the local population in the Surobi district of RC-Capital

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with an Italian task force, resulting recently in the discovery of nearly 70 weapons caches and the delivery of nearly 10,000 kilograms of poppy to Afghan authorities by local nationals.

Balkans

¶8. (C/NF) The SYG informed the Council that he would be traveling to New York on May 21 to meet with UN SYG Ban Ki-Moon to address NATO-UN issues with a particular emphasis on the Kosovo situation. Noting that he had written to Ban requesting assistance in maintaining a fully capable UNMIK police presence in Kosovo, the SYG intends to press Ban on the status of UNMIK, including its current composition. He also said he would seek clarification on UN's plans after Kosovo's constitution comes into effect on June 15, including the UN's views on the transition to the EU's EULEX mission. The SYG also mentioned that he was planning to hold a meeting of the 26 NATO ambassadors in New York during his visit. The D/CMC said the Military Committee had received SHAPE's input to Revision 3 of the Balkans Operations Plan and that this had been forwarded to nations for comments by May 16. Following their input, the MC working group will take up discussion of the plan and hope to have it agreed by the beginning of June. General Wright briefed the PermReps on the situation in Kosovo, saying that 46 percent of Kosovo Serbs voted in the May 11 elections and KFOR continued to maintain a high operational tempo both before and during the election period. MG Wright also briefed on his and SACEUR's

visit to Kosovo, specifically to Gate 1 in the north, which is being secured by UNMIK and Kosovo police with support from KFOR. Wright describing the current situation at the gate as calm. He said, however, that if things deteriorated to a worst case scenario where Kosovo Serbs were taking action against the gate KFOR would need to deploy at least two additional maneuver companies. They would have to secure the gate and access to it, presenting significant logistics and operational challenges that would reduce COMKFOR's flexibility to respond to other threats. Lastly, MG Wright noted that NATO was in danger of not being able to properly prepare to implement the new tasks associated with security sector development and training of the Kosovo Security Force.

Currently NATO has a requirement to fill approximately 112 civilian and military positions related to the new tasks in Pristina and only a quarter of the slots have been staffed with voluntary national contributions. As a result, NATO might not be well positioned to assume responsibility for the KPC by June 15.

19. (C/NF) All Allies who spoke (Spain, Italy, UK, Belgium,

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Bulgaria, Turkey, Norway, Slovenia, Greece and the U.S.) welcomed the news that the SYG would meet with Ban and urged him to press for more details regarding the UN plans for Kosovo and future composition of UNMIK. Spain cautioned against anticipating what the UN or the EU might do and to avoid "demonizing" other international actors, such as Belgrade. He further questioned SHAPE's briefing over what was driving COMKFOR's "worst case scenarios" in Kosovo. Italy and Belgium seconded Spain's remarks regarding inflammatory statements, but also said that any discussions with Belgrade needed to be transparent to other stakeholders -- such as NATO -- and should not put KFOR in the position of being the first and only responder in Kosovo. Norway echoed this last point and added that there should be no re-opening of the Ahtisaari plan. Norway also announced that they were contributing two personnel as VNCs for the civil-military teams in Pristina. The UK applauded the SYG's upcoming trip, saying that NATO needed clarification on UN plans, but pushed back against Spain's remarks (with Turkish support), arguing that NATO's military authorities needed to be able to engage in prudent planning against worst case scenarios -- which they said would not constitute NATO recognition of Kosovo. The D/CMC also pushed back, saying that COMKFOR needed to be prepared for all eventualities, including worst case scenarios. The UK also asked about the possibility of NATO's policy coordination group starting its work on the revised OPLAN in parallel with the military authorities. The D/CMC, in response to the UK, said that there are already agreed and established procedures for the NATO military authorities to provide their input on a joint operations plan prior to it being referred to the political authorities and ultimately the NAC for final approval -- a point strongly supported by Turkey. The D/CMC assured the UK that the military committee was working on trying to have it ready as soon as possible.

110. (C/NF) The SYG thanked the Council for the support on his visit to New York and promised to impress upon the UN that NATO needs to know its post-June 15 plans, as well as current UNMIK force levels. The SYG stressed that NATO could not address NATO recognition, but made equally clear that Allies should not underestimate the "mental switch" which will be flipped in the region on June 15. In response to a U.S. inquiry over how the information will be obtained regarding UNMIK levels and deployments, both the SYG and D/CMC said that they would follow through at both the political and military level on providing to the NAC the required information.

Iraq

¶11. (C/NF) The SYG noted that the PCG will discuss the out-of-cycle guidance on the PMR on May 16.

Statements on Political Subjects

¶12. (C/NF) The UK reported that the UNSC debated Security Sector Reform May 12 in the context of the UNSYG's report on Security Peace & Development. The UNSC will debate post-conflict stabilization May 20 under UK auspices.

¶13. (C/NF) In regards to the situation in Georgia, Slovenia reported the U.S., Slovenian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Swedish representatives visited Tbilisi, meeting with Georgian and UNOMIG representatives. They stressed the importance of media freedom, democratic reform, and free and fair elections on May 21, while also making clear their support for Georgian territorial integrity. According to Slovenia, Slovenian FM Rupel had said that the EU was closely following Abkhazia. He also had recognized that Russia was "an important partner" in resolving the conflict. When Lithuania suggested that the IMS be tasked with providing regular intelligence briefings on the military situation on the ground, Germany objected. In justifying their objection, Germany said that such briefings were useful primarily to those that were involved in trying to resolve the situation. Germany argued that while the UN and EU had a role to play, NATO did not and should not give the impression that it does. At the same time, Germany acknowledged the legitimate role NATO's Political Committee could play in keeping the situation under review. The Netherlands and Italy voiced caution, saying a tasking to the MC to brief Allies was "premature." The D/CMC stated that NATO did not have an independent intelligence function and was forced to rely on information supplied by Allies. Ambassador Nuland reported that the U.S. has "turned up the lamps" on the region and was seeking authorization to share more relevant intelligence with NATO. Lithuania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Portugal, Canada, Latvia and the Czech republic all welcomed the U.S. offer to brief Allies, most expressing grave concern about Russia "testing Georgia's red lines." The SYG concluded by welcoming the U.S. offer to provide more info and asking other Allies also to provide what they could, while at the same time stressing that NATO itself was a consumer and not a provider of intelligence. He also said that NATO should complete its own "homework" by completing its Air Situation Data Exchange link with Georgia.

AOB

¶14. (C/NF) UK PermRep Eldon announced that there would be an informal NATO ministerial meeting on transformation and reform at London's Lancaster House on September 18-19. Eldon stressed that this has been scheduled to allow synergy with other ministerials crowding the calendar -- the June 2008 Defence Ministerial, Krakov and Budapest. The SYG insisted that Ministers attend all of them, stressing that he did not intend to chair meetings with non-ministers "in the chair." He said that ministers should not to consider the London event a replacement for other ministerials in lead-up to the 2009 Summit.

¶15. (C/NF) Responding to earlier NAC discussion on ISAF, the D/CMC confirmed that the Canadian CHOD had just announced a generous offer of air assets for use by NATO, including 8 Bell 412s, 6 CH-47s, and 8 MI-17s.

¶16. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland informed PermReps that U/S of

Defense for Policy Edelman would be in Brussels in early June
and that the U.S. Mission would arrange a briefing with him.
NULAND